

*Sixty-two Years
On the
Saskatchewan
Prairies*



Foreword

Among the distinguished pioneers of the early eighties who contributed to the development of the prairie region there are few who have a more distinguished record of able and disinterested public service than Peter McAra, a member of that indomitable Scottish stock that has contributed so much to the development of the British Empire. Mr. McAra has spent most of his adult years on the Western prairie and in Regina where he made his home he has long been a landmark.

The Saskatchewan Historical Society felt that Mr. McAra was one of those entitled to have a faithful record of his life and activities prepared for the benefit of posterity and with that end in view induced Mr. McAra to grant the Secretary a number of interviews. He has a remarkably retentive memory and a fine gift of crisp and lucid expression. The following account has been taken from his own lips.

Mr. McAra's life in the west has been passed amid rapidly changing conditions and he has lived in his own person much Western history. The positions he has occupied have placed him in touch with many persons of historical importance and have meant much to the fullness of his life. The following account covering the period of sixty-two years spent entirely in what is now the Province of Saskatchewan, should prove of interest not only to the student of history but to anyone interested in the life of the old Northwest since the days of the first settlement.

— Z. H.

62 Years on the Saskatchewan Prairies

1883-1945

MY FATHER went to India from Scotland with the Royal Engineers at the close of the Indian Mutiny. My Mother, a lass of eighteen, accompanied her nineteen-year-old husband, and followed him wherever the Company was established in their work of demolition.

The Engineers' programme was the destruction of many fabulous buildings of rajahs who had taken part in the mutiny. We always remember my Father's tales of their batteries of elephants butting in the fantastically valuable palace walls, particularly those of the King of Oud, who had been a mutiny leader.

My Mother, meantime, had a little daughter Helen, while the Company was stationed at Lucknow, and then I was born in 1862, while we were stationed in Calcutta. We were followed by Dave and now my parents felt that Scotland was the only solution to the educational problem and my Father bought his discharge. At this time I was a lad of seven, but since circumstances gave my parents a servant for everything, I had been completely in charge of a native "ayah," and my language was Hindustani. The great adventure of the journey home was started, a young mother with three small children, spending six months on an East Indian clipper and giving birth to my sister Georgina on the journey. At the end of the journey I could speak fair English, taught by the people of the ship; and we settled down in Edinburgh where I attended George Herriott's school while my Father became a merchant. Before we leave the story of India, I would like to tell this little incident—the homes were then built on stilts on the walls of the compounds to keep away reptiles and thieving natives. In the ceiling of my

Father's sitting room was a huge rotating fan known as a 'punka.' This was operated by a boy, or 'walla,' on the verandah. One hot night the fan stopped, my Father called to the "punka walla" to get on with his job, but there was no answer—then Father opened the small window to speak with him and was greeted by the head of a black python. Reaching for his gun, Father shot into the mouth of the python and its bellow was like the roar of a bull elephant.

By 1882 we were growing up and my oldest sister was married, but there were eight of us at home and the country was in the throes of a depression. Tales came of the great opportunities to be had in the prairies of Canada, and since asthma was greatly troubling my Father we decided to set off to make our fortune in the far Canadian West.

The doorway to the prairie was Winnipeg, where we arrived in the spring of 1883. The place was humming with the activity of the boom of the past year, accommodation was very difficult, and there were few conveniences. Father had an introduction to the members of the firm named Westbrook and Fairchild, who were in the implement business. He obtained advice from them as to the necessary equipment to start in farm life on the prairies, bought all necessary machinery, two yoke of oxen and two cows. I must confess that at the time we did not know whether it was the oxen or the cows upon which the family would depend for milk. This was all loaded on a freight train and I, the eldest son, was placed in charge with instructions to deliver it at Moose Jaw, which was then the objective of the family. I took with me, in the freight car, my brother David and a lad who had accompanied us from the Old Country. Everything was all right until we got to Brandon where we were told that the rule of the railway was that only one passenger was allowed to travel on a car with livestock. The two boys

were promptly thrown off the train but I waited until dark and smuggled them on again, hid them behind some hay and, in this way, we all reached Regina.

In the meantime Father and the family had travelled by the regular passenger train. On the train Father fell into conversation with a Methodist clergyman named Hewitt, one of the earliest missionaries of the region, who advised them to change their destination from Moose Jaw to Regina. The family party got off at the new prairie capital and when the freight train pulled in Father met us at the station and had them unload the car there. Regina, at that time of course, had no streets, nor public utilities, and as it had rained recently there was a perfect sea of mud which might have brought to shame "Christian's slough of Despond." In all this we pitched our tents on the present site of the International Harvester Company property.

There was a considerable rush for homesteads and the most desirable were being quickly taken up. The Dominion Land Department had set up an office on what is now known as Broad Street Park. The building in later years was moved to 13th Avenue and Hamilton Street, where it was converted into a residence for W. H. Stevenson, the Dominion Land agent, and later it became the first cottage hospital ever established in Regina.

Mr. Alex. Fraser, the Chief Dominion Land Clerk, went to considerable trouble to find a suitable location for my Father, and among the ones described, Father thought that the Buffalo Lake region north of Moose Jaw, seemed the most attractive and, accordingly, made preparations to inspect it.

There was a man named Keene who operated a livery stable on Scarth Street, on the site later occupied by the King's Hotel. My Father and I, with a Mr. Paxman and his nephew Summers, made a party and hired a team, and

democrat from a man who was known as "Shorty" McLaughlin. We also engaged a land guide by the name of Borradaile, who was to take us over the prairie trails. There were neither roads nor bridges and we crossed the Wascana about twelve miles northwest of Regina at the "Old Crossing" that had been used in the days of the buffalo hunt. When we reached Cottonwood Creek we found it swollen by continuous rains and we had to make a hazardous crossing with the horses swimming and the water lapping our feet. After crossing the Cottonwood, I remember a curious thing—it was raining on one side of the trail and on the other side it was perfectly dry. Eventually we reached Moose Jaw and after resting there proceeded north to Buffalo Lake to inspect the land that had been described, but we certainly did not like it. It was a stretch of barren rolling country covered with prairie wool, and was known as the "High Pound Hills"; so we came back to Moose Jaw feeling that our journey had been a wasted effort.

Borradaile started our party back home on the trail, saying that he would catch up to us on a saddle pony. We reached Regina without him and found that he had come by train. He was most annoyed with us over the fruitless expedition for he earned a fee of \$10.00 for every homestead located. This annoyance tied up with McLaughlin, who accused us of abusing the horses and asked us two hundred dollars. Father refused to pay the amount and the matter eventually came to the magistrate, Mr. LeJeune, when my Father was defended by D. L. Scott and the matter was dropped by the plaintiffs.

After a few days rest Father contacted Mr. W. H. Gibbs, a representative of a Colonization Company that had control of a large acreage on the east side of Last Mountain Lake. Mr. Gibbs made arrangements that we should go out on inspection and we left in charge of a

man by the name of McDougall. When we got to the village of Craven, in the Qu'Appelle Valley, which was then known as the "Sussex Townsite," we engaged the services of a man named Jack who was very familiar with the country. The first night out from there we camped in tents and when we woke in the morning the horses had got away and we spent most of that day looking for them.. During the course of our hunt we came upon a camp that seemed to be entirely deserted and by now we were very hungry and, according to the custom of the trail, helped ourselves to the food. After further searching we came back to the camp and found the owners getting out their shotguns for the benefit of the Indians, whom they thought had looted the place. However, explanations made us quite friendly. These chaps were called Hewar, and they had a very fine team of little French Canadian horses. They were newcomers like ourselves, and wanting to hitch the horses to the walking plow, they hitched one into the handle and didn't know what to do with the other.

We were pleased with the land shown us here and three members of the family, my Father, Dave and I, took up homesteads at Longlaketon. There were few settlers in the district other than the Benjafield family and they were settled close to the bank of the lake at a place seven miles west of us which they had named "Silton," after their home in Dorsetshire, England.

During this summer of 1883 the whole family moved to the homesteads and commenced their new homemaking. There was no railway north of Regina, and all materials and supplies had to be hauled out by horse or ox teams. On one trip to town my brother, Dave, and I, accompanied by two neighbors, Doig and Kinloch, brought four yoke of oxen to haul lumber for the new buildings. We came as far as Craven on the return journey when a heavy thunder-

storm broke. Dave and Doig crawled under their wagon, while Kinloch and I ran to a bluff for protection from the rain. Suddenly there was a terrific bolt of lightning and then we saw a great circle of fire roll across the prairie and into the river. When the rain stopped we came back to the wagons still amazed at what we had seen and found two very frightened lads crawling out from under their wagon, for the circle of fire had been one of their steel wagon wheel rims. This loss meant searching in the water for the rim and unloading the lumber from the wagon which we took to the Craven blacksmith to be repaired.

Life on a homestead was very difficult for people who had been accustomed to the ordered routine of city life, but we went to work with a will to make our home on the vast prairie. The climate was strange and unfamiliar. During the first summer heavy rains fell, alternated with days of blazing sun and mosquitoes, and these made life intolerable for the children. Then, when winter came, we were snow-bound in a vast expanse of white with bitingly bitter cold winds. In January of this winter my Mother gave birth to her last child and my brother Dave and I had to take the oxen and make a journey to Regina for nursing bottle equipment. We set off in a blizzard and my sister fed the little newcomer by dropping milk from her fingertip until we returned after four days.

As an example of our woeful ignorance as farmers—one morning my Mother settled to churn and one by one the family were recruited to keep the dash going, all through the day and the night. The next morning my brother Jack was sent on horseback to bring over our good neighbor Kinloch to tell us the reason we had no butter. Kinloch looked into the churn and said, "But you've taken off the butter." "Oh no," said my mother. "Well, this

is skim milk," he said. "Why, of course," my mother answered, "we use the cream for our porridge."

One of the most terrifying possibilities to the early settlers was that of prairie fire, that in spring and fall sometimes swept the country. Many times a lonely homesteader saw his house and barnyard swept away by the wall of fire. One summer day I had an adventure that nearly cost me my life, while my father was away from home. I noticed that the air was growing thick with smoke and realized that the prairie fire was coming. I started to plow a fireguard to protect the buildings—this meant plowing two or three furrows and then leaving a fairly wide space, then repeating with more plowing. The space between the furrows was then burned off and this made a very effective guard. Since I was not a very experienced fire-fighter, my burning was carried by a gust of wind across the plowing and quickly spread over the prairie. The fire soon got into a bluff and fed by the deadwood and long grass became quite alarming, so I picked up some wet sacks and rushed to the bluff in an attempt to beat it out. Here I was overcome with smoke and lost consciousness.

Doig and Kinloch, who lived not far away, had seen the smoke and galloped over to give whatever help they could. They rescued me from the bluff and rendered first aid and attended to the fire danger. Incidentally, Doig was the husband of the famous Mrs. Doig, who, when she was Mrs. Kelly, operated the White House, a place of refreshment on Albert Street in Regina. She, as Mrs. Doig, later operated the Windsor Hotel on Broad Street, a very friendly stopping place in the early years. This hotel burned to the ground one winter night in the early nineties.

It was natural that there should be many difficulties in the way of such new farmers as we were and as time

passed our original capital was nearly exhausted. Food, was particularly difficult in the winter but fortunately nearly every poplar bluff was alive with bush rabbits and they provided a big item of the winter diet.

Most of the Long Lake settlers did business in Regina with a jovial little Englishman named Frank Fraser Tims, who ran a general store on South Railway Street. He was a jolly little man with a merry face and a pointed auburn beard which gave him a remarkable resemblance to King Edward VII. On a trip to town I applied to Mr. Tims for a job, feeling that I should become a wage earner. He needed help badly, particularly in connection with the Dominion Express Agency, and told me that if I could report on Thursday, the following week, he would pay me thirty dollars a month. I returned home to find my father very ill with asthma which delayed me making the return trip. Early on the day appointed I started on the forty-five mile journey, walking along with my satchel in my hand and in the freshness of the early morning I made very good time and reached Craven in the Qu'Appelle Valley very early. Here I rested for a short time and climbing the south bank of the valley struck out across the plain, following the old Long Lake trail. The sun was shining in a cloudless sky and the weather was very hot by the time I reached a stopping place, kept by people called Pepper, where I hoped for a drink of water. I was told that I would have to wait until the Pepper boys came back from the spring where they had gone to get a barrel of water using an ox to pull the stone boat, but in my determination not to be late I refused to wait and went on.

From here between Spring Creek and Boggy Creek there were only two houses, the home of the Lamberts, close to the trail and the Brown homestead. Here George,

Alec and Jim Brown had a fairly well established farm and I had great hopes of getting a drink of water there. It seemed as if every ray of sun was roasting me and draining all of the moisture from my body. At last I stumbled across the Brown's plowing and reaching the door found that it was padlocked. I looked through the window and I could see a water bucket on the table and a kettle on the stove and I tried to make an entry but failed and wandered down to the stable. In the stable I found a water barrel on a stoneboat but not a drop of water, so I went back to the house and tore off the padlock, only to find that there was no water in either the pail or tea-kettle. On a shelf I found some eggs and had my first experience of sucking a raw egg. After this, feeling quite refreshed, I started for the Lambert place, two miles away, but when I got there, there was nobody at home and I sat down in the shade of the stable and fell asleep. I was wakened by the Lambert boys coming home to supper and was taken in and royally treated. The heat of the day had passed by now and I started on the last lap of my journey. When I came down into Boggy Creek my feet were very sore and I sat down on the make-shift bridge, took off my new boots, to bathe my feet in the water. After this I discovered that my boots would not go on again, and I was obliged to walk the last six miles in my bare feet.

About ten o'clock that night I arrived at Mr. Tim's store, just about all in. I must have presented a pitiable appearance, for he said, "My Gawd, boy, what is the matter with you and where have you come from." "Well," I said, "you told me if I came back on Thursday you would give me a job." He was kindness itself and took me to his living quarters above the store and made me welcome. I had to stay there for four days before I could get my boots on again. Now I was ready for my first job

which was delivery of Dominion Express. I had a Red River Cart, made without metal, and it was drawn by an exceedingly wise pony that seemed to know when to stop and when to start. The cart made a fearful creaking and complaining noise and the people could always tell when the Express was coming by the weird sounds it made. Once I had been delivering some express to the Indian office, then situated out on the prairie on Dewdney Avenue, and was in a hurry to get home. We started off at a good fast trot, but a board shifted in the bottom of the cart and I fell through to the ground. The horse, however, trotted along without me and went home to the stable.

While I was working for Mr. Tims, there was a railway strike on the C.P.R. At the same time, the Merchants' Bank, one of the first in Regina, was closing and surrendering its business to the Bank of Montreal. The Bank wanted Mr. Tims to take care of its deposits but he did not feel that he had sufficient protection and refused to accept the money. However, the Dominion Express instructed him to take it over and do his best. Mr. Tims was distressed and took every precaution; he chained a ferocious bulldog to the leg of the safe, in which the money was and, at night, I slept on the other side of the safe. This was the only excitement until the money was surrendered to the proper authorities.

After a time, this job played out, and I went back to the homestead. It was again winter but I had not been home very long before one of the three Jeffrey brothers, who were homesteading at Spring Creek, drove into the yard. These men were Scots, from the County of Elgin, and they each used a remarkable means of travelling. Donald used to drive to Craven in a wagon drawn by a cow and an Indian pony and, on his arrival, he would unhitch

the team and then proceed to milk the cow for his lunch. Bob, who was the visitor on this occasion, had a single mule hitched to a bob-sleigh. He had brought a letter for me from W. C. Fowler, the C.P.R. agent in Regina, asking if I would come into town to work for him. I immediately started with Bob Jeffrey and when we reached Craven there was a bad storm brewing and I suggested to Bob that we stay there for the night. However, Bob scouted the idea, declaring that his mule could take us into Regina in no time and we went along as far as Pepper's place but by that time the blizzard was at its height and we were obliged to remain there for the night.

The accommodation at Pepper's was most limited and sleeping quarters were made by partitioning with sheets suspended from the roof. There were several good looking girls in the family and the silhouettes that they made against the lamp through the sheets were very alluring. The blizzard raged for three days, during which our chief amusement was studying the silhouettes at night. On the fourth day the storm had abated a little and we started for Regina. By now the wind had changed at the southeast, the bitterest quarter in winter, and it was blowing almost directly in our faces. After a time I said to Bob, "We must be off the trail," but he went on again about the intelligence of his mule, saying she would take us to Regina in spite of hell or high water. After a time, the mule stopped at a hay stack and we found that we had come right back to Pepper's place where we spent another three days studying the silhouettes. At last the weather cleared and we were able to finish our journey.

I commenced working for Mr. Fowler, the C.P.R. agent, at the station which was then located on Broad street near the present subway. I was the night man and that meant a lot of work, because both the transcontinental

trains arrived during the night. At that time, however, there was not a great deal of traffic and most of my work was to attend to the mail and the express. At the end of the year 1884 I gave up this job because I was very homesick and wanted to have New Year's, our chief celebration of the year, with my people on the homestead.

The season had been a very stormy one with heavy snow and low temperature, but I had the opportunity of getting home with a man named Shearer who drove the weekly mail from Regina as far up Last Mountain Lake as the Post Office of Marieton. There was another passenger with us, a young man named Kirk Smith, who was on his way to join his brother at Longlaketon. Shearer drove a jumper, a low box-like sleigh with no metal on the runners, drawn by a sturdy team of bronchos. The snow was so deep and the drift so bad that the trail had been almost obliterated. We started out by way of Albert Street and found from the first that the winds had packed the snow so hard that as the horses plunged through it cut their fetlocks, leaving splotches of blood on the snow. The prairie spread out for the twenty-five miles to the Qu'Appelle Valley with only three or four buildings to be seen. The last place that we saw on the outskirts of Regina were the buildings of the Gilroy family on the right hand side of the trail. Further out on the left side we passed the homestead of Demetrius Woodward, probably the first squatter in the vicinity of Regina. Six or seven miles out on the brow of the Boggy Creek Valley, was the homestead of Bill Davis, a well-known pioneer. Crossing the Boggy Creek Valley the Lambert homestead could be seen to the left and the Brown brothers place farther on to the right. There was not another sign of habitation for ten miles until Pepper's place loomed up at the head of Spring Creek.

As we proceeded the going had become very difficult.

I had put on many clothes and, among other things, a pair of immensely thick woollen drawers of very coarse wool. We found now that it was necessary for us to get out and walk ahead of the horses to break the trail. At first I undertook this work with all my youthful enthusiasm but, unfortunately, having boots and overshoes, instead of moccasins and the misfortune of the woollen drawers, I was obliged to let the other two in their moccasins do the walking. At dusk we reached the Spring Creek hill and stopped at Jack's Stopping Place where we had a hearty supper in a cheerful room heated by a red hot stove. After the horses were fed we continued our journey. It was comparatively sheltered in the valley, but a gale was howling through the trees and it was as dark as Hades. Kirk Smith and I urged Shearer to remain at Craven until the storm had abated, but he was a hardy resolute fellow and said that no storm could stop him and his ponies when he was carrying the Queen's mail. When we came up the north bank of the valley, the blizzard was wicked and we again urged that Shearer return to Jack's place. His only answer was to urge the horses forward and we plodded on for several miles but we found, on several occasions, that we were off the old sleigh track and Shearer had to scout about to get the sleigh back on. We had a consultation and it was decided that both Kirk and Shearer should walk ahead of the team while I drove the sleigh. The snow was so thick it was all that I could do to see the figures of the two men with bowed heads plodding on into the storm keeping the trail all of this time with their moccasin feet. The blizzard kept increasing and all at once I lost sight of them. I stopped the team and in a few minutes Shearer appeared and said, "My God, I have lost Kirk and we are off the trail. Kirk told me that he saw a light and disappeared before I could stop him." We shouted again and again, but our voices were choked

off by the howl of the storm and there was nothing that we could do for the night. "Well," I said, "let us hope that he has found some shelter. We will stop at the first bluff we reach and try to light a fire." Despite everything, Shearer was still determined to push on, but I said, "You can do what you like, but it is the first bluff for me."

To my great relief we came very quickly into the shelter of a bluff of poplars. Imagine our amazement when we saw a light flickering through the trees and came upon a camp of a half breed named Horsfall and I recognized him as an interpreter. They had a snug camp in the heart of the bluff and brought us in and fed and warmed us. I wanted to go out at once to search for Kirk but Horsfall pointed out that it would be absolutely useless and that if we left the shelter of the bluff we would be lost too. Accordingly, we spent the night around their fire, and with the first glimmer of light Horsfall set out to guide us to our homestead and, by this time, I had to be brought in lying on the dog sleigh.

It was bitterly cold in the morning but a search party was immediately organized to look for Kirk. The party going back over the ground found his tracks where he had wandered off the trail and worked over towards the valley again. Apparently he started travelling in a circle to make a trail for himself and had reached the place where the snow had gathered on some shrubbery at the top of the ravine—here the drift had given way and Smith had fallen to the bottom of the ravine. Going down the searchers found the frozen body and it was a sad New Year's Day for us all.

Soon, I had a call to come back to Regina to work with a Winnipeg firm that had bought the bankrupt stock of J. J. Campbell, who, very early had established a large store on the west side of Broad street near Eleventh

avenue. Mr. Campbell's mercantile venture had not been a success and was in liquidation under the management of a man named David Ross, who was, incidentally, a member of the first choir of St. Paul's Church. I remember that when he stood up to sing, Ross being a small and slight man, he made a remarkable contrast with his neighbor, Deputy Sheriff Gigson, who was a tall husky man.

Ross and I had a brisk trade with the Wood Mountain Indians and bought great stores of buffalo hides from them. I can remember these great heaps of robes being stacked from the floor to ceiling, and, at that time, these were selling from two-fifty up, each. There was one very beautiful robe that a half-breed from Wood Mountain had traded from one of the Chiefs of Sitting Bull's band. These Indians had sought refuge in Canada in 1877 from the American soldiers after the battle of the Little Big Horn in Montana when they defeated and scalped General George Custer and his men. During the first four years they spent in Canada they had made their headquarters at Wood Mountain about one hundred and forty miles southwest of Regina. The particular robe I speak of had been taken from the body of a big bull buffalo and was particularly fine and silky. It was beautifully tanned, Indian fashion, and trimmed with the claws of grizzly bears, the possession of which is regarded by the Indians as an emblem of bravery and prowess. The fur remained on the outside and on the tan side there was an ideographed picture of the Custer battle, showing all the turmoil of the conflict—Indians killing and scalping soldiers and riderless horses galloping about. This robe was, even then, worth a great deal of money but someone stole it from the store and we finally traced it to the Dominion Express office where it was found to have been shipped to Scotland. Needless to say, it was never recovered.

In these days of buffalo hide trading there was also a brisk business in buffalo bones and when the breeds came to town with their loads for shipment, racing was the great pastime. Where Leopold Crescent now stands, we had a round half mile track. A big breed owned the top horse, a seventeen hand, raw-boned brute, called Black Diamond. In these days, too, a man named Metcalf used to come out from Kingston to hunt and he decided that he would bring out a horse to race Black Diamond and through the betting easily collect a carload of Indian ponies. The first race was held on the racetrack—Metcalf lost to Black Diamond and demanded a straight-away. Mr. Bonneau had just finished grading Victoria Avenue from Albert Street to Broad Street and the race was set for there. The breeds lined the street, betting their shirts and their guns on Black Diamond and, once again, the big black horse was the winner and Metcalf gave up in disgust.

I had my first experience in frostbite while I was working in the Campbell store. Mr. Ross and I slept upstairs in a part of the building that had never been fully completed and as we lay in bed we could see the stars winking at us from the frosty winter sky. We did our best to heat the place with a stove but as wood was our only fuel the fire soon died out after we had gone to bed and the temperature quickly dropped below freezing. Before retiring, I always stacked some kindling under the bed and left a cup of coaloil and some matches on a chair. In the morning I would take the kindling from under the bed and reaching over to the stove, lay a fire, pour on the coaloil, strike a match and stay snug under the blankets until the stove was red. I would then put a pail of ice on the stove to thaw out for tea water and lay the loaf of bread beside it to thaw out. When the thawing was completed we would have our breakfast and go down to open up the store.

Usually our first visitor in the morning was Dr. Cotton, the much-loved pioneer doctor of Regina, who lived just across the street. One morning when the doctor arrived I said to him, "Say Doc, I wish you would take a look at my nose, it's very sore." Why, of course it is," said the doctor, "it has been frozen and it will cause you a great deal of bother." "Nonsense," I replied, "I haven't been out of the building today." "Nevertheless," said the doctor, "that is what is the matter with it," and I had good reason to know it was the truth.

We disposed of the Campbell stock as quickly as we could and I remember sales made to Henry Fisher, an eccentric, well-to-do Englishman. The sales consisted of many cases of small panes of glass, camp kettles and tin lids and I often wondered what he did with them. Mr. Fisher had established probably the first large farm in the Regina district, about four miles west and a little north of the town and had named it "Bayswater" after his old home in England. He was not a very good farmer, but he had an excellent location for, even now, in 1945, nearly sixty years afterwards, the Bayswater farm is still a going concern and has steadily been producing excellent crops.

After the Campbell's store was liquidated I went back to Long Lake. I had not been there very long when I was placed in charge of the general store at Craven. This site of Craven was near the Hoskin's property, east down the valley from the present Craven, which, at that time was the site of Colonel Stone's ranch. The owner had been taken ill and required hospitalization and the nearest place that he could obtain it was at Brandon, Manitoba.

At that time there were large numbers of Indians coming and going up and down the valley besides a large camp located on the west side of Long Lake, close to a

place called Kane's Point, where the summer resort of Regina Beach is now located. We had a brisk trade with these Indians but this was the year that the Riel Rebellion broke out, the spring of 1885.

When the news came of the defeat of the Mounted Police at Batoche by a large body of half-breeds commanded by Gabriel Dumont, excitement and unrest spread like prairie fire among the Indians. There were large Indian reserves adjacent to Qu'Appelle valley and there was great alarm among both the people of Regina and the farm settlers. These Indians were less than two decades removed from the days of the buffalo hunt and the war trophy, and some of the older warriors still cherished, as trophies, the scalps taken from the head of their enemies. Star Blanket, the troublesome chief of the File Hill Indians was reported to be inciting his people to war. In the vicinity of the reserve they were dancing their war dances and the throb of the Indian drums made echoes in the valley of the Qu'Appelle. Colonel Alan MacDonald, the Indian Agent for Treaty 4, assisted by Father Hugonard of the Qu'Appelle Mission, both of whom had great influence with the Indians were doing their best to allay the unrest. A little later Chief Piapot, Chief of the band that was closest to Regina, threw his influence on the side of peace as well and although there was some minor raiding an outbreak was averted. Nevertheless, for some time, there was real danger and many of the Indians were definitely unfriendly toward the white people.

Our homestead had the most extensive buildings in the neighborhood and it was made a fort where most of the women and children of the neighborhood took refuge. The British flag was flown and it was known as "Fort McAra." I was able, at Craven, to get news almost every day of the progress of the rebellion and the feeling of the

Indians and send word to the Fort. This was possible because Craven was in the path of the Indians' journeyings. I was advised by the Mounted Police that no ball cartridge was to be sold to any Indians and in order to be safe, I lifted a board in the floor and cached all the "fixed ammunition" in a hole. Not long after three buck Indians came into the store and asked for ball cartridge. I told them that I had none but they did not believe me and proceeded behind the counter to examine the shelves for themselves. I was alone in the store and not very happy about the situation, for the Indians were becoming very angry but the day was saved by the arrival of Winstanley, who had a reputation as a hunter and plainsman. He invariably went about armed and the Indians, knowing his reputation as a bold and fearless man, calmed down and left the store.

Ed. Winstanley was a well-known figure in the district in the pioneer days. He was a mighty hunter, a splendid shot and as brave as a lion. As settlement increased and the wild game began to disappear in the region Winstanley left the country and went to British Columbia making his home on an island in Plumper's Pass in the Straits of Georgia, where he was able to hunt and fish to his heart's content.

All during this anxious time I never left the store and usually slept on the counter, half expecting an Indian raid. One night I was awakened by pounding on the door, which I opened with great hesitation and found a man named Kane, who was employed at a trading post operating on the west side of the lake at the Point named after him, and owned by Kearns Brothers of Fort Qu'Appelle. Kane was in a state of great excitement and exhaustion and was accompanied by a big raw-boned Ontario lad who was his assistant. He told me that the Indians of the

Fishing Reserve had raided his store and chased them off the premises. I do not know how Kane, who was a small man, with large black whiskers, had made this terrible trip. They had escaped over the ice of the lake and stumbling across it through the deep snow had reached Craven. Kane wore a large buffalo coat and carried a Winchester rifle and a grip and being completely done in on his arrival, he stayed with me. The Ontario lad who was scared stiff would not stop and we could see the snow flying as he hurried across the valley and climbed the Spring Creek Hill heading for Regina.

Some days later it was necessary for me to go to Regina and during my absence my brother Dave was in charge of the store. On my return he told me that there was an Indian camped across the bridge who had a fine collection of beaver skins and he showed me one that he had taken in trade. It was a prime skin and I decided that I would go over to the Indian and see if I could make trade. I walked up the valley and found the camp in the shelter of a bluff. The inevitable Red River cart was standing close to the tent opening, but there was no other sign of life, so I walked over to the cart and saw that it had a bundle of beaver skins. I was examining them when the Indian, accompanied by his squaw, who was a good looking woman according to Indian standards, made an appearance from somewhere. I examined the skins, one by one, and put them one on top of the other on the ground by my side. When I had completed my examination I sat down and the Indian squatted opposite me and we commenced to negotiate. I had a fair knowledge of Cree, the Indian seemingly had no English and he was a hard trader. According to the custom I would throw money on the ground as a bid for the skins. However, it reached a point where the Indian indicated that he wanted

a price beyond all reason. My patience became exhausted and I began picking up the money, muttering in English something very uncomplimentary to his ancestry. I realized then that he understood English for he jumped to his feet in a rage and made signs for me to get out. I tried to reason with him but it was hopeless and gathering up my money started to walk away. This infuriated the Indian and he picked up the Winchester rifle that lay against the cart and running a cartridge into the chamber made threatening motions in my direction. I gathered that I had better leave quickly, but I did not want to show any signs of fear so I stuck my hands in my pockets and started to stroll away. I can tell you that I was properly frightened and would have much rather have been running. I had not gone many steps before a bullet went singing over my head and then I did hurry. I found out later that what really happened was, that as the Indian was drawing a bead on me the squaw suddenly threw herself on him and disturbed his aim. I do not remember much of what happened after that until I found myself at the other end of the bridge. Once there, I started whistling and can still remember that it was "Home, Sweet Home."

When I came into the store my knees were wobbling and I sat down on a nail keg. Colonel Stone, who had a large ranch near Craven, was in the store with three of his cowboys and he said to me, "Gawd bless me, McAra, what's wrong?" "Oh, nothing," I replied, but he insisted and I told the story. The cowboys, who had been finding life rather quiet, came to the conclusion that here was a situation that called for action, and one of them named "Long Jack" and another called Addie Rolf, ran out of the door and mounting their horses called out, "Hurrah boys, let's go and clean these Indians out." I pointed out that the first shot against an Indian in the valley might result in a massacre of the white people, par-

ticularly those at Fort McAra and Colonel Stone and I managed to quiet them down. While this excitement was going on, an old gentleman named Doual arrived. He was a retired Civil Servant who was then living in Craven, and always wore a long cavalry sword jangling at his side.

Colonel Stone, who was a Justice of the Peace, decided that it was his duty to arrest the Indian, and accordingly a small party went over to the Indian encampment to arrest him. When we got there we found that he had pulled out and I did not see him again for years, and then I learned that he was called Jack Dead Body. He got this name because once, when buffalo hunting, his gun had exploded doing him serious bodily harm. .

The store at Craven was the meeting place of the district. The mail came in once a week and some of the settlers had to come a long distance to get their mail. In the group was a rancher from farther down the valley by the name of Murray Honey, who lived on the land which was later owned by the Lauder family, and a man named Fox who brought in a couple of carloads of pigs which ran wild in the valley.

When business was slack I would sometimes ride down to the Honey ranch. Murray Honey was a very handsome, pleasant man, possessed of some means and since we were both Scotch, we loved to talk of our Mother Land. He left the valley many years ago and returned to Scotland where he had inherited a title with estates and I never heard of him again.

One summer afternoon when I arrived at Honey's ranch, there was not a stir about and I thought that no one was at home. I knocked at the front door and getting no answer went around to the back and with difficulty pushed the door open and entered upon a remarkable

scene. At that time there was an academic Irishman living on a very remote homestead in a deep ravine and on occasion he supplemented his scanty living by making a most abominable alcoholic concoction which he peddled with great discretion. This day he had arrived at the Honey ranch with some of his brew but after tasting it Honey and his friends had come to the conclusion that it was pretty vile stuff and that they were going to do something about it. When I came in the door the bootlegger was backed up in a corner behind it, in one hand he had a Mexican bowie knife and in the other a tin cup with some of his brew. Facing the bootlegger was a Montana man, named Mowbray, trying to make him swallow some of his liquor. The bootlegger was objecting strenuously but was forced to take sips because Mowbray was pricking him in the stomach with a large bread knife. Sitting on the sidelines was a cynical Englishman called Charles Freeman Thomas, who had a horse ranch on the Little Arm. Incidentally, Thomas was the son of the Vicar of Wakefield in England—not the literary character—and was a near relative of Lord Willingdon. Also, sitting on the coal box was Foster, the ranch foreman, laughing uproariously.

While this was going on Honey had been asleep in his bedroom, and he came walking out rubbing his eyes and made Mowbray stop his performance, pointing out that this was not the proper way to go about it. He said the liquor was very bad and that the bootlegger should suffer for his sins, and went back into the bedroom and picked up his Winchester. I was a little alarmed and said to Foster, "I think this nonsense has gone far enough." "Oh," replied the foreman, "There is no danger—there's nothing in the magazine of the rifle."

With a solemn air Honey steadied himself against the door jamb and pointed the rifle at the bootlegger, who gave

an unearthly yell and, dodging Mowbray, made a bolt for the kitchen door and darted up the cattle trail that wound in the direction of a bluff. Honey followed to the kitchen door and leaning against its jamb aimed at the speeding man who was leaping from side to side to escape any bullets that might come. To our utter surprise shots rang out and Honey kept pumping the lever of the rifle while the bullets kicked up the dust around the feet of the fleeing man. Then, the click of the hammer showed an empty magazine and the bootlegger disappeared in peace.

We stood for a minute completely dumbfounded while Honey calmly lowered the rifle and said, "My Gawd, I missed him." He then replenished the magazine from his pocket and began to look around for some other target. Just then a party of Indians on the march with men on horseback, Red River carts, loose horses and dogs, came down the valley trail. Honey called us to the window to look down at them and said, "You see that Pinto pony?" indicating a Shagganappi that was running on the outskirts of the procession. We said we did and without more ado, he swung his rifle up and down fell the pony with a bullet through him. Instantly there was a commotion among the Indians. They immediately started in a body for the house and Foster said, "Now you've done it, the Indians are going to clean us out." Honey was quite unruffled and said, "Never mind, boys, leave it to me." Putting down his rifle he walked out to meet the Indians in a most friendly manner. A clamour started and they demanded in broken English and in Cree to know what he meant by shooting their valuable pony. He laughingly led the whole party over to the horse corral and told them to take their pick in return for the dead animal. They picked out the best horse and the deal was closed. The procession went back into the valley where they pitched camp and,

proceeding to skin the dead Shagganappi, made a great feast.

The owners of the Craven store, Sibbald and Lindsay, now took over their store and Mowatt Brothers of Regina offered me a job at Wood Mountain. Wood Mountain was about one hundred and thirty-five miles southwest of Regina and Mowatt Brothers had the contract for supplying the Police post there. This was an historic post, having been the headquarters of the boundary commission in 1874 and it had become well-known as the camping ground of Sitting Bull and his Sioux warriors while they took refuge in Canada following the Indian wars in the States of 1876 and 1877. The Mowatt's had a storehouse at Wood Mountain and Dan Mowatt, one of the earliest mayors of Regina, suggested that I go to be in charge. All the goods had to be taken by wagon and Red River carts and an old Scottish half-breed named John Henderson had the contract for conveying the goods. Speaking of John Henderson—he had, the previous year, acted as hangman of Louis Riel. He asked for this as a privilege because he previously had been a prisoner of Riel's. The only payment he asked was that he might have the rope and it became a legend that he sold many miles of this supposed rope to tourists at one dollar an inch.

We started out for Wood Mountain with heavy loads. I drove a Red River cart, drawn by a big raw-boned roan horse that was most cantankerous. When we started to cross the Moose Jaw Creek on the old Wood Mountain trail my roan lay down in the middle of the creek and there was nothing that I could do that would get him up again. I had to unload all of the goods and carry them up on to the farther bank. Sometime before this I had developed a disability from over exertion and this came back with excruciating pain. There was nothing to do but to send

me back to Regina for medical attention. The roan was pulled out and hitched to the cart on the homeward trail, he was greatly pleased to be going in this direction and trotted off briskly. I had to lie flat on my back in the bottom of the cart and I have never forgotten the bumpy journey lying exposed to the blazing sun.

When I was fit again I decided to make a business venture of my own. There was a small shack on Broad Street, just opposite the Town Station of the N.W.M.P. and I arranged to rent it and start a tobacco store. The greatest worry was lack of funds and I went to call on Mr. John Dawson of Dawson, Bole and Company, who, after I had explained the proposition, advanced me a good stock of tobacco and cigars. By thrifty financing and long hours of attention to business I built up a nice little trade and the store became the meeting place of the Commercial Travellers with spare time on their hands. It was soon known that if you wanted to buy a good cigar and hear a good story you would find both at the little store. The business was going very well when my father decided in this year of 1886 to abandon his homestead. The years had been dry and unproductive and the young people had to have a chance to go to school, so my father moved the whole family into town. I turned the cigar business over to him and accepted a job offered me by a representative of a wholesale grocery firm from Winnipeg.

I was to go to Broadview, a divisional point on the C.P.R. ninety miles east of Regina and supervise a settlement between Joseph Clementson and his creditors. Clementson, at that time, was quite prominent in the country and was later a member of the Legislative Assembly. At that time there were no branch railways and Broadview was quite a distributing centre, and was as well the stage centre for such places as Yorkton, Crescent City and In-

singer. The Crooked Lakes Indian agency, where there were a large number of Indians, was situated about ten miles north of the town under the charge of Colonel Alan Macdonald, a distinguished officer and a veteran of the Wolseley expedition. He was also the first Indian superintendent of Treaty 4, appointed following the Qu'Appelle Treaty of 1874.

There was a small Hudson's Bay Trading Post on the reserve under the charge of a Orkney Islander, named Mackenzie, whose initials included about half the alphabet. North of the Qu'Appelle Valley there was an English settlement known as Cotham. This was jocularly given a very sacrilegious twist on occasion. Among its settlers there was a distinguished British journalist named William Trent, who afterwards took an active part in public life in Regina. Other people that come to mind from there were Thomas Powell, also a British journalist, a man by the name of Frood Hudson and Bissicks and Willway.

When I arrived at Clementson's store I found things in a state of confusion. The store had been run on what was known as the "truck system." There had been a great deal of trade with the farmers and sometimes the products were not in the best of condition. I found, in the basement of the store, there were several tons of butter which were only fit for soap making, and this I shipped to Winnipeg for that purpose. I made close friends with a big good natured chap called Charles Dodds, a nephew of Mr. Dodds, one of the early Mounted Police surgeons. Charles would come into the store and demand some of Mrs. Blank's butter. It was horrible stuff and I asked him why he wanted it. "Oh," he said, "If you want anything and the store hasn't got it you will be sure to find it in her butter, whether it is a pant button or a shingle nail."

In the town there was a butcher store run by a couple

of Frenchmen who had a fine, well-bred Collie dog, that was the apple of their eye. In the neighborhood there was an Englishman who owned a savage bulldog that he had trained to be a fighter, and it was the terror of all the dogs in the neighborhood. One day this animal got into a scrap with the Frenchmen's collie and killed it. The Frenchmen kicked up an awful row and made all kinds of threats as to what they would do to the owner of the bulldog. The Englishman's answer was, "You should have kept your pet away from my dog, for he can lick any dog in the Northwest Territories." One of the Frenchmen said, "You just wait, I'll get a dog that will make your dog hunt it's hole." "How much money have you got to back that up," said the Englishman. The butcher produced twenty-five dollars and said, "Cover that," and the bet was on. The Frenchman was given six weeks to find his champion.

One day the two butchers hitched up a team and went on a mysterious journey. They came back in the middle of the night and people declared that they heard some dreadful growling, shouts and chain clanking. In the morning the story got about that the butchers had brought home some kind of a wild animal and had it carefully locked up in a cage, in a dark shed at the back of the shop. Every day at noon, one of the brothers, armed with a stout club, went into the dark shed to feed the animal and there were sounds of blows, growls and the rattling of chains. The other brother stood at the door to keep the people away and would call in, "For Gawd's sake, take care of yourself or you will be eaten alive." As time passed the excitement grew and people wondered if it was a bear or a timber wolf, but the brothers said nothing. We noted with a great deal of interest that one of the brothers was buying a great many packages of Diamond Dyes and

we couldn't figure out what they would be doing with them.

At last the day of the battle came. Promptly at mid-day the Englishman appeared with his bulldog on a leash and shouted to the Frenchmen to bring on their battler. The street was full of the citizens, whose sympathies were mostly with the butchers, and we all waited to see their animal appear. In a minute, one of the strangest animals that had ever been seen came gambolling out. It was a tall, gangling pup, the result of all the mismating of the Indian dogs on a reserve and had been partially clipped before being dyed all colors of the rainbow. It made a beeline for the bulldog crouched by his master's feet. The circle of railway employees and townspeople hemmed in the arena, but as the many colored apparition chased the terrified bulldog around and around the ring he finally found an opening and streaked off under the livery stable.

The poor disappointed pup then began racing about trying to make friends with some dog, but they all looked and ran. It was a day of runaways, for even the farmers' horses were frightened out of their wits. The Frenchmen gleefully collected their twenty-five dollars and the poor shaved pup was adopted by a couple of travellers who were on their way west by ox team.

After the Clementson store got well organized we paid special attention to the Indian trade. I persuaded the Indians to dig Seneca root which was in demand for shipment to China as a medical herb. This was shipped to Winnipeg in half ton lots at prices ranging from eighteen to twenty-two cents per pound. This trading put me in a position with the Indians which led to my attending their annual Treaty payments with a stock of goods. Treaty payments were always a day of celebration among the Indians. Every man, woman and child received five dollars

while head men got fifteen and chiefs twenty-five. There was always a carnival of buying and as soon as the Indians got their money, gambling games started all over the place.

I always remember Shee Seep, Chief of one of the bands at Round Lake. He came in for his treaty money wrapped in an old blanket, old leggins and a dirty shirt, and carried his shotgun under his arm. He paid off his debts to the Hudson's Bay with his Treaty money and bought himself a complete new outfit, and then sat in to a gambling game with a small party of Indians, squatting on their heels close to my tent. They played all night long and the following morning Shee Seep had won quite a lot of things from the other Indians. Later in the day, his luck began to change, and the following day he walked off the Agency, once more in his old blanket and his old shirt, having lost all he owned.

Indian dogs were an awful nuisance. I had complained to Mackenzie of the Hudson's Bay about them, and he suggested that I take a shot at the next one that tried any pilfering. On wakening up in the moonlight I saw something crawling out from under the tent, so I took my revolver from under the pillow and took a shot, and instantly heard the most unearthly yell. I went out to investigate and found a half-breed screaming on the ground with a bullet in the most prominent part of his stern. Mackenzie had turned out too and we took the wounded man into the Hudson Bay shack, fixed him up, fed him a bottle of pain-killer, gave him some tobacco and he went away contented.

Among the most interesting things that I saw during my life there was one of the last Sun Dances that ever took place on the prairies. This was held at the Crooked Lakes and the Rev. Hugh McKay, the Presbyterian mis-

sionary for Round Lake, did his best to persuade the Indians to give up the dance but they refused to listen to him. In the midst of an open space, close to a bluff, was a maypole arrangement. From the top of the maypole rawhide lariats were brought down and handed to the Medicine Man. He took the Indian bucks, who were to be in the dance, slit the skin on each side of the chest and inserted a skewer between the muscles. The lariats were then tied to the ends of the skewer and the Indians swung themselves against the rawhide and danced around and round the maypole to the beat of the drums and the shrills of the whistles. This dance kept up until they broke the skewers loose, and the Indians were now braves. Some of the Indians had the loose skin below the shoulder blades punctured the skewers set in, these were then fastened to lariats attached to buffalo skulls and the Indians danced around dragging these, until they pulled themselves free. In the bluff, screened by branches, were the squaws and young Indians who kept up a steady beat on the drums and played their cherry wood whistles.

Another interest of Mr. Clementson's was a large farm near Grenfell which was quite a sporting town. There was a great deal of horse racing and I decided to come up to Regina and take Black Diamond down to Grenfell. I sent a breed courier to the Dirt Hills for the horse, but found when he came in that he had been used to haul buffalo bones and his feet were in very bad shape. After a chat with Mr. Dave Gillespie, a well-known horseman, we doctored up his feet and I decided to take along my own horse Spider. The townsmen became interested so Mr. Gillespie, Dr. Cotton, Harry Hamilton, W. P. McCormick and Charlie Wilson, a local horseman, loaded a car of horses and we left for Grenfell. Charlie Wilson was to ride Black Diamond and my horse Spider was to be ridden by Mr. Belson of Grenfell. This latter gentleman was the

brother-in-law of Sir Richard Lake, who was later the Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan. The races were run in true racing style, silk colors, jockeys with spurs and whips. Spider had been accustomed to being handled by my brother Jack and bolted from under the rider and left me with my horse and thirty cents.

While I lived in Broadview I met a very lovely young lady named Amanda Jane Wallace who was teaching school in Moosomin and in November of 1888 we were married there. She was a daughter of Mr. H. N. Wallace and a member of an United Empire Loyalist family of Fort Ellis, Nova Scotia. During the thirty-five years of our married life her devotion and co-operation added much to my success. We had a family of eight children, four of whom are living today. Barbara Ellis, married to H. Nolan Macpherson of Vancouver; Edna Alice, who has always made her home with me; Peter Graham, now Squadron Leader, R.C.A.F., married Dorothy Bland, and is located in Winnipeg and Elizabeth Rancey (Mrs. Morrison), who makes her home with me. There are five grandchildren, Peter McAra Macpherson, 1922; Barbara Wallace Marr Macpherson, 1924; Peter Warren McAra, 1934; Ian Bland McAra, 1938 and Barrie McAra Morrison, 1930.

The Clementson business was now in good order and my services were no longer needed so, in the fall of 1889, we came to Regina to live. I was offered a position in one of the prominent mercantile businesses in Regina, and accepted the job on the understanding that it would last for a specified time. One day the proprietor informed me that my services would be dispensed with at the end of the week, but I pointed out that we had a definite agreement. "Oh no," replied the gentleman, "there is no written agreement and business is business." I was very very angry but

there was nothing I could do, so I just said, "Alright, but believe me I will get even with you," and left. This storekeeper had an ambition for public life and was a persistent candidate for civic and political honors, but on three different occasions was defeated. On one occasion he was running for the Regina constituency in the Northwest Assembly and, for a while it looked as though he might make the grade. In those days the electors made their ballot by marking a cross with a colored pencil. There was a considerable German speaking population in the east end and most of them had a vote. A memo of instructions to the voters was printed in German and read, "Vote with the blue pencil for the storekeeper." The German electors cheerfully followed the advice, but since the storekeeper's pencil officially was green he was badly defeated. He blamed me and said, "I wish to heaven I had given you a year's work." A little later the storekeeper came to my home and said, "Peter, a delegation has waited on me and offered me strong support if I will run for mayor of Regina. Now, confound you, it is senseless for me to run if you are going to oppose me. What about it?" "Well," I said with a laugh, "I think the score is even. I'll call quits and give you what help I can." The storekeeper was elected and from there on we were friends.

During the decade from 1885 to 1895 the pioneers on the Regina plains suffered a good deal of hardship. A dry cycle set in in 1885 with only two good years, 1888 and 1891. The farmers had not yet learned the use of summer-fallow and there was widespread distress. The population of Regina stood at about 2,000 for six or seven years and a number of the original settlers left the country. There was little money available and business establishments were being forced to give up. As often happens in such periods the distressed pioneers were blaming the Government and

some of them were turning to strange political gods. Up to this time I had been too busy making a living in the new country to pay much attention to politics.

I was now employed with the late J. A. McCaul, who had an extensive lumber yard. One morning Mr. McCaul said to me, "Peter, we had a meeting of the Conservative Association last night and we elected you Secretary-Treasurer." I asked for time before accepting because I wanted to know a little more of the political situation. I reasoned it out, that the Conservative Party at that time had a national policy of fostering small Canadian industries by a system of protection. The country was new and it seemed to me that the Government was acting like a young couple making preparations for the development of their offspring. Industrial competition was very keen from the United States and it appeared to me that it was proper for Canada to protect her own infant industries. However, since then the child has grown up to be a big unruly young man and, perhaps, in latter years we have reached a stage where the parents need to be protected from the child.

My imagination was fired by the powerful figure of Sir John A. Macdonald and in 1888 his Government had granted Federal representation to the Northwest Territories. Mr. Nicholas Flood Davin, the editor and owner of the Regina Leader, had been elected the first member for the vast constituency which extended west from McLean to Medicine Hat and north from the International boundary to the Saskatchewan river. I decided to throw in my lot with the party and became very closely associated with Mr. Davin. We remained loyal and intimate friends until his death in 1901, and I have always considered him the most outstanding figure of his time in the West. His early career in England included a period as War Correspondent.

dent in the Franco-Prussian war. He came to Eastern Canada in the late 70's and his imagination was carried away with Sir John A. McDonald's vision and so he remained. In 1883 Mr. Davin founded the Regina Leader and under his gifted guidance it became a well-known weekly. He gave vision and optimism to the people of the prairie but his poet's mind carried him far from the realities of life, and I found my Scottish forthrightness a fine foil for his poetic flights.

An incident that gave us many laughs happened one winter night. A number of us were coming by the back way, from the Conservative Committee rooms above the old Canada Drug Company, even then, owned by Mr. Robert Martin. It was situated on South Railway street where Pearlman's now stands. As we went along the lane we stumbled over something and found it to be one of our leading citizens who had indulged, not wisely, but too well. None of us felt disposed to take him home so we quietly opened the back door of Mr. Alf Wright's undertaking parlor close by and laid our pal in a coffin. In the morning Mr. Wright, who lived upstairs, heard the most blood curdling noises from below and leapt out of bed to investigate. In his back shop he found this prominent citizen, quite sober, sitting up in the coffin in a state of abject terror.

During all of this time while working with Mr. McCaul I realized that his business was failing. Too much credit had been given and Mr. McCaul was forced out of business. Besides the lumber yard he owned a ranch in the Qu'Appelle Valley and was the agent for numerous insurance companies. When the business went into liquidation Mr. McCaul retired to his ranch and several of the outstanding insurance companies offered me their agencies. From then on I engaged in business on my own account.

Elections in those days were very interesting affairs. I remember an incident during the Dominion Election of 1891 when Mr. Davin was being opposed by Thomas Tweed of Medicine Hat. There had been a split on the Conservative Party which left two Conservatives running in the district and the Liberals had decided to support Mr. Tweed. Mr. James H. Ross, of Moose Jaw, was chief Liberal in the west and he was not only an astute politician but a man of pleasing personality and was an opponent of mettle.

In the south of the province there was very little settlement. At Wood Mountain and Willow Bunch, near the American boundary there was a large settlement of half breeds. These were descendants of hunters from the Red River who had, in other days, come there for the buffalo hunts and when the buffalo disappeared in the 80's they settled down to wait there for their return. These people all had votes and Mr. Ross had them completely under control. Mr. Davin's supporters engaged a well-known old-timer named J. D. McInnis, who had a fine team and outfit, to go down to Willow Bunch and Wood Mountain and do his best about the vote. Mr. McInnis was joined by Mr. Marlatt of Moose Jaw and they left with a good supply of things to please the breeds as well as a quantity of liquor. Mr. Ross saw the outfit starting out and said, "By Jove, that's the last of my half breed votes." He suddenly thought of the telegraph line to the Mounted Police post at Wood Mountain and wired to a friend there who was the Justice of the Peace telling him of the McInnis expedition. Mr. Ross suggested that his friend should have Mr. McInnis and his party arrested, the liquor confiscated and the hearing adjourned until after the election. This plan was carried out to the letter. The two men were put in jail and the liquor was given to the half breeds who had a royal time drinking to the confu-

sion of Mr. Davin who did not get a single vote in the district. The day after the election the case against the two men was dismissed.

Shortly before the election of 1898 Walter Scott, who had been given the contract for government printing, bought the Leader from Mr. Davin. Mr. Scott later was premier at the time of the formation of the province and for a good many years later. At the time of the sale he promised to support Mr. Davin on his editorial page but withdrew the support over the Manitoba School question. Mr. Davin then established "The West" newspaper and brought Bob Westgate, a school teacher at Edenwold, in to manage it. A small gray brick building was built on the northwest corner of Rose street and Davin. This arrangement continued until Mr. Davin's death. Then, a syndicate composed of Sir Frederick Haultain, H. W. Laird, later senator; Judge Embury, Jack Westman and other prominent Conservatives bought the paper. They built a block on Hamilton and twelfth avenue on the present parking space of the Safeway stores and named the paper "The Star."

The Dominion Election of 1898 found all Canada in a turmoil. The Conservative Party which had been so great was tottering to a fall deprived of the guiding hand of Sir John A. Macdonald. The Manitoba School question had brought a radical and sectarian element into the fight and the farmers, after so many years of failure, were naturally prone to blame the Government. An organization known as "The Patrons of Industry" had come into being. It was a farmers' organization that had, in addition to its political significance, a platform for co-operative trading. J. K. McInnis, a radical Regina Journalist, who owned and edited the Regina Standard, secured the Patron nomination. The entrance of the Patrons into the

political field was a serious handicap to Mr. Davin because many of his former supporters were forced by their farming affiliations to support Mr. McInnis. The Liberals had a nominee named Grant, a sheep rancher from the vicinity of Medicine Hat whom, however, did not "pan out" and Mr. J. H. Ross took him out of the field and swung the Liberal support in behind Mr. McInnis. Now there was a real battle on as the Patrons, who previously had little money, were able to dip deeply into the Liberal Party funds.

The story of these meetings would make interesting reading today. There were no holds barred. Mr. Davin was easily the master on the platform but there were other influences at work. It was the practise that the candidate should outline his meetings and he would be followed by his opponent. Mr. Davin's programme began at Medicine Hat and, much to his surprise, he found that Mr. McInnis had a programme of his own which opened with a meeting at Davin, southeast of Regina. The problem then was who was to represent Davin at this meeting as he could not be there. I remembered that Mr. Tweed, Mr. Davin's opponent in 1891 had been attending a Masonic meeting in Winnipeg and was on his way home. I wired Mr. Tweed on the train that we would meet him at Pilot Butte where Mr. and Mrs. Davin and I drove. The situation was briefly explained and Mr. Tweed, like a good sport, took his grip off the train and arranged to represent Mr. Davin at the Davin meeting while Mr. Davin went on to Medicine Hat.

Mr. McInnis arrived at the meeting supported by Mr. R. H. Williams of Regina and a number of other Liberal stalwarts while the only representative of Mr. Davin present was Jim Hawkes who reigned as a sort of rural king at Balgone at this time. When Mr. Tweed

entered the hall, Mr. McInnis was in the middle of his speech and was more than amazed to see him. Mr. Tweed took his seat on the platform and finally Mr. McInnis shook hands with him and asked him if he were going to speak. Mr. Tweed assured him that he was and that he was there to speak in the interest of Mr. Davin. This "riled" Mr. McInnis to such an extent that he turned his verbal abuse on Mr. Tweed reminding him that he had supported him with his paper in the last campaign. Mr. Tweed interrupted to say that if Mr. McInnis would look back in his memory he would remember that he had received valuable consideration for every article that had appeared in The Standard. Mr. Tweed next appeared at a meeting at the Barracks of the Northwest Mounted Police where there was a large number of men at that time. Somebody in the audience twitted Mr. Tweed with having changed his colors since the 1891 election. Mr. Tweed replied, "In the times of piping peace the officers of an Army may have their differences, but when they hear the drums of the enemy coming over the hill they stand shoulder to shoulder, and that is now the case." I feel sure that Mr. Tweed's declaration captured the Mounted Police vote for Mr. Davin.

Mr. J. H. Ross, later Senator of the Moose Jaw district; Mr. Frederick Haultain, later Sir Frederick and Chief Justice of Saskatchewan and Mr. G. V. Bulyea, later Governor of Alberta, were leading figures in the Northwest Territories Executive Council in the nineties. In 1898 a stirring young member was elected from the Calgary district, R. B. Bennett. Mr. Bennett was later leader of the Conservative Party in Canada, Premier of Canada and is now a Baronet in England. His maiden speech was most scathing of the budget brought down by the Executive Council. We local Conservatives felt that we had a strong new ally. The next day, though, Mr. Haultain in

his quiet detached English manner put Mr. Bennett entirely to route and amazed even those of us who already admired his oratory.

In 1899 when Sir Charles Tupper was the leader of the Conservative Party there was a feeling among them that the coming election might bring them into power again. Sir Charles came West and, in company with Mr. Davin, campaigned in the Manitoba provincial election where the Conservatives were successful. At its conclusion Sir Charles came on to Regina and the two men made a tour of the West. While Sir Charles was in Regina he sent for me and was kind enough to say that there was no one in all the Northwest Territories who had done more for his country and the Party nor who had stood more staunchly to his guns than I. He continued that, if he were at the head of any Government to be elected, I would be his first choice for Deputy Minister of the Interior as my knowledge of Western Canada was exceeded by no other citizen.

We belonged to the old Presbyterian Church, then situated on the corner where the post office now stands. We had under contract twelve lots where the present Knox Church and Manse now stands. We owed for this three hundred dollars to the townsite trustees. Mr. Carmichael was the minister; I was the Church Secretary and Mr. Hugh Robson, now Chief Justice of Manitoba, was Chairman of the Board. Mr. Robson brought the Board's recommendation to the Congregational meeting that the three hundred dollars be paid, but some prominent members opposed the recommendation, calling the property a slough with a cow path. There was much heated discussion and, to settle the matter, I made a bid to pay fifty dollars for a Quit Claim deed and this seemed to awaken them to some idea of the value of the land and the report was adopted.

In 1902, owing to the illness of Mr. J. H. Benson, the Sheriff of the Judicial District, I acted for him. While in this position my duty was to see that the sentence of death given to Tom Lemack, an Indian killer, was carried out. Lemack was from the Muscowpetung Reserve and many years before he had been suspected of the murder of his brother-in-law Mateney but had escaped to the United States where he was employed with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show. In 1903, the late T. C. Johnston, afterwards a judge of the Court of the King's Bench, then Crown Prosecutor, had occasion to go to Montana and learned that Tom Lemack was living there—had him arrested and brought back to be tried for murder.

At this trial James Balfour, K.C. defended Tom but he was sentenced to hang. At the last minute a reprieve was granted and Mr. Balfour and I went to the jail to tell the Indian. Mr. McIvor, the jailer, took us to the death cell where Mr. Balfour said to Tom, "Well, Tom, they aren't going to hang you after all." Tom stopped his tramping, and Indian fashion, put his hand over his mouth—then, said to the lawyer, "What did you say?" When the sentence was repeated he broke into a Red River jig crying "Hi, yi, yi, yi."

It was my duty to see that Tom was delivered to the Stony Mountain penitentiary near Winnipeg. I obtained a Mounted Police escort and we were greatly amazed when we got to the station to find it packed with Indians. We stood guard at the doors and windows and allowed Tom to say goodbye to his friends. By some strange grapevine Indians appeared at all the stations along the way. Some years later I was astonished to see Tom walk into my office for his sentence had been for life. He had proven himself a model prisoner and had come to thank me for my kindness and, incidentally, borrow two dollars from me.

From there on, Tom became a monthly visitor always leaving with two dollars.

In 1905, the size of our family decided us to move to a larger home. The home of Judge Richardson at 2013 Victoria Ave. was for sale and we settled there to make our home which we still enjoy. The house stands today as it was built in 1886 and is now a historic landmark.

It was in 1905 that the Saskatchewan Autonomy came into force. Regina had by order in council been made the capital of the Northwest Territories in 1882 and it was assumed by most people that it would be the capital of the new province—Saskatchewan. However, the three growing and enterprising towns, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Moose Jaw, put in strong claims and at one time it looked as though Saskatoon might be the winner. When it was brought into the Legislature, Premier Scott took a strong stand and Regina was chosen to remain the capital.

For some time I had undertaken to do the assessing and collection of taxes for the town of Regina. I carried this work on until I was approached by a delegation in 1905 to run for the council and I was elected. It is with great satisfaction that I look back to the group of men that I was associated with in the Council who did so much to make Regina grow.

Immigration had started to come rapidly and the population had increased and the town had outgrown its public utilities. Previously, practically all the water used in Regina had been drawn from wells and there was very little drainage. There were no paved streets and no street railway system. It became clear to those in charge of the government of the city that improvements must be made rapidly. In 1906, when I was mayor, we decided that complete modern living must be established. A programme

of waterworks, sewers and paving was commenced. A street railway system was established and the electric light facilities were extended.

Many new public buildings were built at this time and these are still a credit to a much larger city. The Central Collegiate established a new and different type of architecture which was quickly copied in many other parts of the country. The Public Library was built and the new General Hospital was opened at this time. The present City Hall was built with a unique method of financing. It was done entirely from sales of lots to wholesalers on the north side of the tracks making it unnecessary for a debenture issue. An amusing feature of the building of the City Hall was that we found, upon its completion, it had no chimney. We were obliged to add a chimney at the rear on what is known as Davin street.

While Regina had been growing it had, like all other new towns, lived through a speculative "boom" and many people in search of easy money had bought up lots. With the slow progress and the economic depressions of the last of the century, the value of property dropped badly and a great many lots had to be taken over by the town for taxes. In this group were most of the lots covering an extensive area on the north side of the C.P.R. tracks, now known as Regina's spur track district. While I was mayor in 1906 I sponsored this system which is unique on this continent. We established a wholesale district and laid trackage and ground facilities to accommodate any wholesales who wished to establish himself. This arrangement brought Regina into prominence as a great distributing centre and almost every agricultural implement concern doing business in the west had a branch here. The International Harvester Company verified my claim that there were more agricultural implements distributed from here

than from any other place in the world.

The water situation had been very difficult in Regina and was the cause of considerable anxiety. The original plan provided for building a dam on Boggy Creek so that sufficient water might be impounded to supply the town. It was found, however, that due to the absence of current in the stream it was almost impossible to keep the water fresh when impounded in this way and we were obliged to make new plans. Mr. Wynne Roberts arrived from South Africa and was asked to make a survey of the situation. His investigations carried him over all the territory surrounding Regina, and he finally recommended that drilling should start at a place in Boggy Creek that was the lowest point in an area of thirty-five square miles. This was started and several splendid artesian wells were brought in. From this source and from one or two other locations, between six and eight million gallons of water a day was produced. This still runs from Regina taps seeing daylight for the first time at a temperature of about thirty-five degrees.

In the fall of 1910 I was called to a meeting in the King's Hotel where I found a group of influential business men who asked me to stand for the Mayoralty for 1911. I explained that I had agreed to support Mr. Balfour but Mr. Balfour generously withdrew his name and I ran for the position. This offer, I always felt, was due to the work that I had done as a representative of the Board of Trade. I had been deputed from this body, with Mr. J. M. Young, to interview Mr. Chamberlain of the Grand Trunk Railway system, western vice president in Winnipeg, whom we visited and who, with reluctance, showed his papers to prove that all his efforts with Regina representatives had failed to give him any satisfaction as to how and when they could get entrance into the town. While I was mayor in 1911 I had the satisfaction of arranging for the entrance

of the Grand Trunk into Regina.

1912 was the cyclone year. It was a Sunday afternoon, June 30th, and I had just returned from showing the Superintendent of the Grank Trunk some of the advantages of our city. It was a fearfully hot afternoon and we had just decided to move indoors when the storm broke. I remember going upstairs to close the windows and coming down I looked out of the window on the landing—looked again—because the whole tower of the Metropolitan Church had disappeared.

The most freakish things happened in the cyclone and one was the complete disappearance of the cement from eight freight cars located on the tracks at the Parliament Buildings. This was found plastered on the ruins of the Metropolitan Church. Other freight cars were picked up and slammed across the street into the brick walls of warehouses. A seventy-five thousand bushel elevator completely disappeared.

Before we had completely realized what was happening the late George A. Mantle, then City Commissioner, opened our front door and fell on the rug dripping wet. Gasping for breath he said, "My Gawd, Mr. Mayor, what has happened to your city?" I immediately left for the power house and had the electric power cut off because of the danger of live wires. The engineer, Mr. Bull, had the pumps going full force figuring that there would be fires, but, as a matter of fact, so many hydrants had been broken that the water was being lost on the streets.

Protection had to be given in the damaged areas and we arranged that the troops at Camp Hughes should be brought in. A great many people were left homeless and the City went right to work and put up buildings to house them. We made plans to advance money to people who

could re-establish their homes. The Canadian Pacific Railway and the St. John's Ambulance Association sent representatives to give all possible help, but after they had attended a number of our meetings they said that there was nothing that they could offer to do to improve the situation. Both organizations left substantial cheques to be used by our committees and withdrew. Many nights I left the City Hall at one or two in the morning and, on awakening, I had no recollection of how I got to bed.

We had correspondents in Regina from almost all of the important Canadian newspapers and they were united in their praise of the splendid organization that we had established. The debris was cleared up almost like magic and the business and important activities of the city were open in less than two weeks.

There were miraculous escapes but more than thirty people lost their lives. An amusing incident occurred on Smith street, where a lady found herself sitting in the bathtub in the middle of the street. Among other things a telegram came from the family of a fortune teller, who had a camp opposite the Massey-Harris warehouse. The telegram read, "Is the money safe? How is mother?" Mother was in the St. Paul's Hall which was being used as an emergency hospital and when they had put her to bed the nurse found three hundred dollars in her stocking.

World War I followed closely after the cyclone and since my private and civic life had been very strenuous for a good many years I decided that I had done my share.

My life has been so full of interests, including as well as the activities mentioned: President Associated Boards of Trade of Saskatchewan and Alberta, 1907;

President of the Regina Board of Trade, 1909 and Chairman of the Regina Collegiate Board from 1907 to 1919. Public opinion has been kind enough to call me "Father" of the Urban Municipalities Association movement. I did organize the first meeting of this in 1907. In 1918 I was appointed Western Director of the Board of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway for a 2-year period.

From 1911 I had been honoured by the Presidency of the Anti-Tuberculosis League formed in that year and, at the insistence of its executive, I still maintain that office and enjoy my contacts with the progress of the fight in which our province dropped to second place this year for the first time. Another link with other days is my still active participation on the executive of the Regina Exhibition Board. I have enjoyed membership on this since 1906 and enjoyed the privilege of being President in the year 1935.

In 1929 it was my good fortune to marry Mollie Macdonald Stoddart of Listowell and we spent 15 years of happily married life until her death.

Keeping pace with the development of this great country has been an interesting adventure and I have been happy to live its youth with it.

2013 Victoria Ave
Regina, Sask.
January, 1945.

P. McARA.

